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By Mr. T O W N,
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Longumque pulchrâ stemma repetit a Leda. MART.

To Mr. T O W N.

S I R,



T has been my good fortune to be born of a family, that is recorded in the Herald's Dictionary, as one of the most antient in the kingdom: We are supposed to have come into *England* with *William* the Conqueror. Upon my accession some years ago to my elder brother's estate and title of a Baronet, I received a visit from *Rouge Dragon*, Esq; Pursuivant at Arms, to congratulate me upon my new rank of a *Varasfour*, and to know whether I should chuse to bear the *dexter base points of the Lady Isabel's Saltire in chief*, or only her *Sinister corners*; she being one of the seventeen coheiresses of my great great great

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great great grandfather's fourth wife *Dorothy*, the daughter and sole heiress of *Simon de la Frogpool* of *Croakham* in *Suffolk*. This unexpected visit must have disconcerted me to an invincible degree, if upon recollection I had not only remembered Mr. *Rouge Dragon* as a constant companion to my late brother, but as a kind of tutor in initiating him into the Science of Heraldry, and the Civil and Military Atchievements, to which our nobility and gentry are entitled. As soon, therefore, as I could recover myself from my first surprise in hearing an unknown *English* language, I humbly thanked Mr. *Dragon* for the pains he had taken in considering my Coat of Arms so minutely, but hoped he would give himself no farther trouble upon my account : because I was fully determined to bear the plain *Shield* of my grandfather *Sir Peter*, without taking the least notice of Lady *Isabel's Saltire in chief*, or even of her *Sinister corners*.

BE it to my shame or not, I must confess that Heraldry is a science, which I have never much cultivated : nor do I find it very prevalent among the fashionable studies of the age. Arms, and Armorial tokens, may, I suppose, be regularly distinguished, and properly emblazoned, upon the family plate to which they belong : but I have observed of late, that these honorable ensigns are not confined entirely to their proper owners, but are usurped by every body, who thinks fit to take them ; insomuch that there is scarce an hackney coach in *London*, which is not in possession of a Ducal Crest, an Earl's Coronet, or a Baronet's Bloody Hand. This has often given me great offence, as it reflects a scandal on our nobility and gentry : and I cannot but think it very indecent for a Duke's coach to be seen waiting at a night-cellar while the coach-

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man is tipping off a glass of gin, or for a Countess's landau to set down ladies at the door of a common bawdy-house. I remember I was one morning disturbed at my breakfast by a fashionable rap at my door; when looking out of my window I saw the coach of the lady dowager — drawn up before it. I was extremely surprised at so early and unexpected a visit from her ladyship; and while I was preparing to receive her, I over-heard her ladyship at high words with her coachman in my entry; when stepping to the stair-case I found that they were squabbling together about sixpence, and soon perceived that her ladyship was dwindled into one of my house-maids. This badge of nobility, assumed at random according to the fancy of the coach-painter, I have found inconvenient on other occasions: for I once travelled from *London* to *Derby* in an hired chariot finely ornamented with a Viscount's cypher and coronet; by which noble circumstance I was compelled in every inn to pay as a Lord, though I was not at that time even a simple Baronet, or (in the language of my friend Mr. *Dragon*) arrived to the dignity of a *Varasfour*.

I HAVE, indeed, sometimes doubted, whether nobility and high rank are of that real advantage, which they are generally esteemed to be: and I am almost inclined to think, that they answer no other desirable end, than as far as they indulge our vanity and ostentation. A long roll of ennobled ancestors makes, I confess, a very alluring appearance: To see coronet after coronet passing before our view in an uninterrupted succession, is the most soothing prospect, that perhaps can present itself to the eye of human pride: The exaltation that we feel upon such a review takes rise in a visionary and secret piece of flattery, that as glorious, and as long

long, or even a longer line of future coronets may spring from ourselves, as have depended from our ancestors. We read in *Virgil*, that *Anchises*, to inspire his son with the properest incitement to virtue, shews him a long race of kings, emperors, and heroes, whom *Aeneas* is fore-doomed to give rise to: and the misery of *Macbeth* is made by *Shakespeare* to proceed, less from the consciousness of guilt, than from the disappointed pride, that none of his own race shall succeed him in the throne.

THE pride of ancestry, and the desire of continuing our lineage, when they tend to an incitement of virtuous and noble actions, are undoubtedly laudable; and I should perhaps have indulged myself in the pleasing reflection, had not a particular story in a *French Novel*, which I lately met with, put a stop to all vain glories, that can possibly be deduced from a long race of progenitors.

“A NOBLEMAN of an antient house, of very high rank and great fortune,” says the Novellist, “died suddenly, and without being permitted to stop at Purgatory, was sent down immediately into Hell. He had not been long there, before he met with his coachman *Thomas*, who like his noble master was gnashing his teeth among the damned. *Thomas*, surpris’d to behold his lordship amidst the sharpers, thieves, pickpockets, and all the *Canaille* of Hell, started and cried out in a tone of admiration, “Is it possible that I see my late master among *Lucifer’s* tribe of beggars, rogues, and pilferers? How much am I astonish’d to find your lordship in this place? Your lordship! whose generosity was so great, whose affluent housekeeping drew such crowds of nobility, gentry, and friends”

“ friends to your table, and within your gates, and whose
 “ fine taste employed such numbers of poor in your gardens,
 “ by building temples and obelisks, and by forming lakes
 “ of water, that seemed to vye with the largest oceans of
 “ the creation. Pray, my lord, if I may be so bold, what
 “ crime has brought your lordship into this cursed assembly?
 “ — Ah, *Thomas*, replied his lordship with his usual con-
 “ descension, I have been sent hither for having defrauded
 “ my royal master, and cheating the widows and fatherless,
 “ solely to enrich, and purchase titles, honours, and estates
 “ for that ungrateful rascal my only son. But prithee, *Tho-*
 “ *mas*, tell me, as thou didst always seem to be an honest,
 “ careful, sober servant, what brought thee hither? Alas!
 “ my noble lord, replied *Thomas*, I was sent hither for be-
 “ getting that Son.”

I am, Sir, your most humble Servant,

REGINALD FITZWORM.

I MUST agree with my correspondent, that the study of Heraldry is at present in very little repute among us; and our nobility are more anxious about preserving the genealogy of their horses, than of their own family. Whatever value their progenitors may have formerly set upon their Blood, it is now found to be of no value, when put into the scale and weighed against solid *plebeian* gold: Nor would the most illustrious descendant from *Cadwallader*, or the *Irish* Kings, scruple to debase his lineage by an alliance with the daughter of a city-plumb, though all her ancestors were yeomen, and none of her family ever *bore arms*. Titles of quality, when the owners have no other merit to recommend them, are of no more estimation, than those which the courtesy of the vulgar have bestowed on the deformed: and when I look over a long Tree of Descent, I sometimes fancy I can discover the real characters of *Sharppers*, *Reprobates*, and *Plunderers of their Country*, concealed under the titles of *Dukes*, *Earls*, and *Viscounts*.

It is well known, that the very servants, in the absence of their master, assume the same titles; and *Tom* or *Harry*, the butler or groom of his Grace, is always *my Lord Duke*

in the kitchen or stables. For this reason I have thought proper to present my reader with the Pedigree of a Footman, drawn up in the same sounding titles, as are so pompously displayed on these occasions: and I dare say it will appear no less illustrious, than the pedigrees of many families, which are neither celebrated for their actions, nor distinguished by their virtues.

THE Family of the SKIPS, or SKIP-KENNELS, is very antient and noble. The founder of it *Maitre Jaques* came into *England* with the Dutchess of Mazarine. He was son of a Prince of the Blood, his mother one of the *Mesdames of France*: This family is therefore related to the most illustrious *Maitres d'Hotel* and *Valets de Chambre* of that kindgom. *Jaques* had issue two Sons, viz. *Robert* and *Paul*; of whom *Paul* the youngest was invested with the purple before he was eighteen, and made a Bishop, and soon after became an Archbishop. *Robert*, the elder, came to be a Duke, but died without issue: *Paul*, the Archbishop, left behind him an only daughter, *Barbara*, base-born, who was afterwards Maid of Honour; and inter-marrying with a Lord of the Bed-chamber, had a very numerous issue by him; viz. *Rebecca*, born a week after their marriage, and died young; *Joseph*, first a Squire, afterwards Knighted, High Sheriff of a County, and Colonel of the Militia; *Peter*, raised from a Cabin-Boy to a Lord of the Admiralty; *William*, a Faggot in the First Regiment of the Guards, and a Brigadier; *Thomas*, at first an Earl's Eldest Son, and afterwards Lord Mayor of the City of *London*. The several branches of this family were no less distinguished for their illustrious progeny. *Jaques* the founder, first quartered lace on his coat, and *Robert* added the shoulder-knot. Some of them, indeed, met with great trouble: Archbishop *Paul* lost his See for getting a cook-maid with child; *Barbara*, the Maid of Honour, was dismissed with a big belly; Brigadier *William* was killed by a Chairman in a pitched battle at an ale-house; the Lord of the Admiralty was transported for seven years; and Duke *Robert* had the misfortune to be hanged at *Tyburn*.